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THE COTTAGE GIRL;

OR, AN ACCOUNT OF

ANN EDWARDS.



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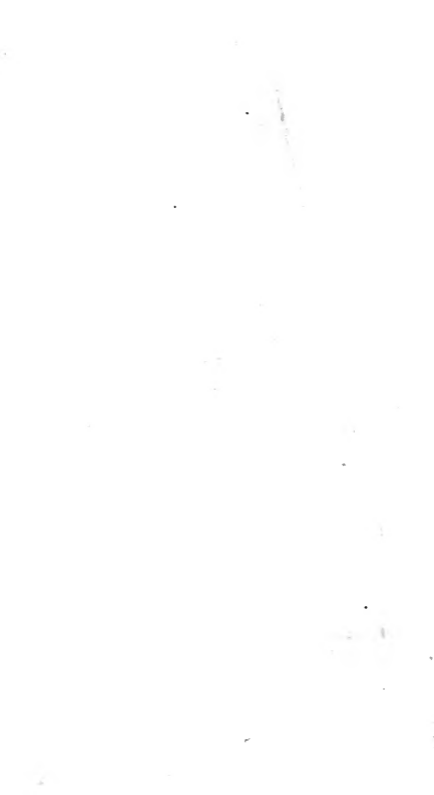
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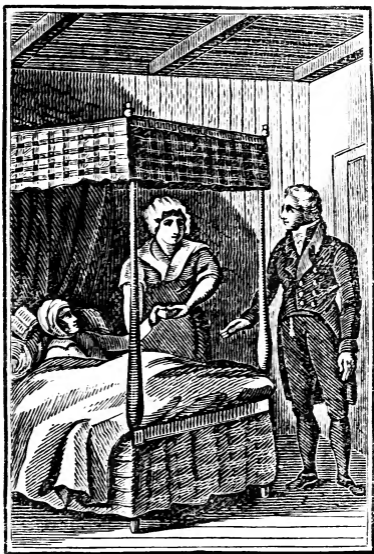
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REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION OF THE
AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

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NO. 146 CHESNUT STREET.

1831.

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THE
COTTAGE GIRL.



ANN EDWARDS, was among the first in the place where she lived, whose conduct adorned the gospel, and served greatly to encourage her minister. Her name was on the first list that was made of such as would attend Sunday school, and it was never blotted from the list till four years and a half after—when death removed her from these little assemblies below, and placed her, as we trust, among the saints above.

God did not see fit that this dear girl should be much known in the world while she lived in it, but her piety will always be remembered, when all that the world esteems great and noble is considered vain.

Perhaps some of our girls neglected to attend

our school or our evening meetings, from indolence, or because they loved their own ways better than God's ways; but *Ann* was never absent except when sickness kept her at home. She knew that Sunday school was a place of kind instruction; and that where God's word was read and studied—where hymns of praise were sung, and where the voice of prayer was heard, it must be her own fault, if she did not find it good to be there.—And she was blessed in her attention to these means of grace—and so will all children be, who attend on them in a proper manner.—There is a promise in the Bible, which children should love to think and talk about, "Those that seek me early shall find me." Prov. viii. 17.—Her greatest delight was that of *Mary* of old, sitting at the feet of her spiritual teacher, and seeking to increase that good part which none could take from her.

She was about seventeen years old when she died.—She was very small for one of her age, and her sickness made her very weak and tender, and she therefore remained at home with her parents. At the end of her second year's attendance at the Sunday school, she took a class of small children and was a useful assistant until God was pleased to call her away from her work, and give her a crown of joy in his kingdom.

The school and Sabbath-evening meetings had been continued twelve or thirteen months before any spiritual effect seemed to appear. The introduction of "Janeway's Token for Children," was, about that time, undoubtedly owned and blessed of God, who caused that scriptural knowledge which the children had acquired from the study of the Bible to sink deep into many of their hearts.—It is not possible for me to forget the evening when I first read the history of one or two young Christians from that little work, and made occasional remarks as I went on. The sighs and tears of my youthful hearers showed how much they were affected; and the christian conduct of several of them has well proved, that those feelings were not caused by sympathy or the sensibilities of youthful and tender minds, but by something far superior and more substantial.

Ann was among the first who felt the conviction and burthen of sin while reading "Janeway's Token," nor did the time that passed, between the first visible beginnings of religion in her soul, and the day that put an end to all her troubles, make any other alteration in her views and desires, than that she saw and felt more deeply what she was by nature, and was more earnest in prayer, and desirous to be what the Lord's people

are by grace. Her love of the ordinances and the people of God became stronger and stronger, while the principal traits in her character were weakness, filial fear, and sobriety of manner.

I, who next to God, knew more of what was passing in her heart than any other person, was well assured, that, on many occasions, the Lord made the light of his countenance to shine upon her; yet she was always fearful of taking comfort, and often, very often would exclaim, "O, I am much afraid I shall not hold out to the end—I find my heart so cold, so prone to wander, so much cleaving to the earth."

A short life like her's, passed in a shepherd's cottage, and diversified only by the labours of the field and the daily work of the family, can afford but little for the biographer to relate; but it ought not to be forgotten, that the power of godliness is often more eminently displayed in these humble dwellings than in princely palaces.—Proud man may, and indeed often does, overlook or despise the lowly Christian; but He who became poor, that we through him might be made rich, neither despises the piety of a humble cottager, nor views with indifference the dwelling-places of his saints. He smiled on his own work in the heart of this poor girl,

and made her last days better than the first, and in their conclusion he converted her dying room into the very gate of heaven.

In tracing the progress of grace in her soul, it must be remarked, (though perhaps to the displeasure of some,) that Ann was made to experience severe trials of her faith. Not that she wanted for food or raiment, or any really necessary comforts of life, neither were her parents deficient in natural affection towards her; but there were others in the family who viewed her with unkindness and scorn.—From one of these she had to hear little else than coarse abuse and vulgar ridicule for every thing she said or did of a religious nature; and particularly for attending at my room.—From another she had to hear much disputation on difficult doctrines.—And from a third, from whom gentleness and tender behaviour might have been expected, she received much that was very unkind.

Her health had been on the decline for the last nine months before her death, and sometimes, for many days together, she suffered much pain from swellings, and an abscess in the neck, and another on the face. These, for several weeks previous to her departure, rendered her incapable of doing any thing of consequence about the house. Her naturally ruddy cheeks now assumed a death-like pale-

ness, unless when the consumptive flush was on them; and her frame sunk into weakness and rapid decay. She loved her parents and longed for their salvation; but she feared her poor father and her brothers had no compassion on their own souls.

She saw much danger where they saw but little; and on this account, she shed many a tear, and offered up many a prayer—may those tears and prayers one day be answered. In addition to meeting my children and young people for moral and religious instruction as often as possible, I allowed some of them to correspond with me by letters. This regulation, if it brought some extra labour with it, also brought much interest, and afforded me many opportunities of suggesting advice, and giving instructions and warnings in a variety of cases, more suited to the individual's circumstances than I could possibly do when several of them were together.—In these their little unadorned epistles, they often threw off much of that reserve which they ever maintained in my presence; a reserve which one cannot but admire, although it sometimes stands in the way of doing and receiving good among Christians. I have at this time eight of Ann's letters before me, and some I have lost. The first I received from her was soon after the reading of "Janeway's Token for Children." It

contains little else than prayers to God. For though she was writing to me, her mind seems to have been fixed on herself and on her Maker, as the following extract will show:

“O God, give me thy grace to know and to try to understand thy holy scripture more and more, that my heart may be stirred up with grace and love to God, and our Saviour Jesus, who bore our sins and wickedness.—O how thankful I ought to be that I am not cut off in my sins! I hope the Lord will have mercy upon me, and make me like those that we read of, them that are now in heaven and at the right hand of God.—O God! thou knowest all my sins. O give me thy Holy Spirit to change my heart.—I hope the Lord will comfort me under all my troubles, and I hope you will stay with us.

“ANN EDWARDS.”

It is now above three years since the above was written. Her subsequent letters show not only an increasing ability to express herself, but (what is of infinitely more consequence) an increasing knowledge of herself, of Christ her Redeemer, and enlarged desires to be with him; interspersed indeed with many complaints against herself, and with many expressions of fear, lest she should fall short of that crown which is promised to

those who continue faithful unto the end. There is not one of these letters but contains much interesting matter. But it would be tedious to the reader to have half their contents laid before him. I shall therefore take two or three of them only, and from these make such extracts as will tend to show how religion maintained its empire, and subdued more and more of her soul to God. As I do not consider myself at liberty to alter or embellish these humble letters, I hope their rusticity and little grammatical inaccuracies will be overlooked in the recollection of the situation which poor Ann filled in life, and that she never could conceive these epistles would at any time appear in public.

The next letter I shall in part produce was written in April, 1816. In this she says, "O my dear Sir, Satan and the temptations of the world seems to me a great snare, when I think of it, it fills me with fear, and I think how shall I hold out faithful to the end.—O for Christ's sake do not forget me in your prayers.—O that I was free from these temptations, and this world of sin and vanity, to be for ever with the Lord.—I have had great proofs that I shall not be long here on earth O that the Lord would cut short his work of grace in me and take me to himself. I have had comfort in

meditating upon heaven, and I wish my thoughts were more in heaven,

“For I want, oh I want to be there,
Where sorrow and sin bid adieu.”

I want to share that glorious kingdom above—O my dear Sir, I cannot thank you enough for your kind letters, and good wishes for me; for indeed I am not worthy of them, but the Lord will reward you for them all—O my dear Sir, go on in the strength of the Lord a little longer, for the conflict will be soon over, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry.—O that you and I may have our lamps trimmed and be found waiting for our Lord’s coming.”

The next letter I received was at the conclusion of the same year, in which she again utters many similar complaints, though it was evident to all who knew her, that she was growing in grace, and was entirely separated from every thing like light or trifling pursuits, company, or conversation. Yet she says in this letter, “I have had reason to mourn over my cold hard heart; for in a manner it has been like the troubled sea, never at rest, for Satan is so busy with me: when I would do good evil was present with me. But I would rather suffer afflictions of mind all the days of my life than to bear

eternal misery—I hope the Lord has in some measure opened my eyes to see what a poor sinful rebel I was by nature, and I hope in some measure weaned my heart from this world. Still my heart is too often cleaving to the dust, and my soul is very much cast down at times. The Lord knows I am a weak vessel. But still the Lord will not despise the day of small and feeble things—O my soul, take fresh courage, press forward in the strength of the Lord to fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold on eternal life—O my dear friend, pray for me, for I think your prayers avail so much.—Pray the Lord to give me more grace and faith to believe; for you know I am beset by a great snare of Satan, that is unbelief. O my dear Sir, pray the Lord to give me more of that mind which was in Christ Jesus. I think I may say I have been a cumberer of the ground another year; for I have not lived so close to the Lord as I ought. But oh, may he give me grace to bring forth more fruit to his glory for the future! I sometimes think I shall not be long here, but if the Lord sees fit to cut short his work of grace in my heart, I am very willing to resign my life into his hands. Let him do what seemeth good with me and then take me to his glory.”

It has been already observed that Ann felt much for the spiritual good of her relations.

She had one sister some years older than herself living 7 or 8 miles from home. For this sister she felt a great affection, as she had always received much kindness from her. But it was not till about the time of her writing the above letter to me that she could summon up sufficient courage to speak or write to Sarah on the subject of religion. At length, however, she overcame her scruples, and from learning that Sarah's mind was more disposed to consider these matters than formerly, she wrote her a letter of much affection and simplicity, in which she says, "though I myself am younger than you, yet I perhaps, through the instructions that have been given to me, may understand things more fully than yourself—my dear sister, though you have long been seeking your own pleasures, and the things of the world, and its vanities, and looking to the creature more than the Creator; my dear sister, though you have said in your heart, I will not have God to reign over me, yet, my dear sister, pray to the Lord to change your heart, and renew a right spirit within you, for Satan is always desirous to have you that he might sift your soul as wheat; so we have need to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. My dear sister, if the Lord is now beginning to show you what a sinful creature you are by nature and by practice; do not forget to go to Christ

and pray to him to pardon all your sins, and wash them in the blood of the Lamb, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness," &c.

Such was the strain of Ann's first letter to her beloved sister Sarah.—May the Spirit of God render her simple scriptural advice effectual to the salvation of her to whom it was given!

At the time of her writing the two last letters from which I have given extracts, she was fast declining in body, and was often called upon to meet those trials from a part of her relations at home which I have already noticed. Yet amidst the growing infirmities of her body, and all the outward and increasing trials with which she was encompassed, she cast her soul upon the Lord, and he sustained her, as will be seen by the last letter she wrote to me, and by one she, after that date, wrote to her sister Sarah.

In the last epistle I received from her, (dated March 1, 1817,) she says, "I think the time long since I had a letter from you. Some time back my mind was much carried away with gloomy doubts and fears; but thanks be to God, I am able to cast them aside more than I once did—bless his holy name for it. I hope I can say in the sight of God, that my soul has been engaged more earnestly in the spiritual warfare than it ever was before. For Christ, my dear Saviour,

has seen fit to lay on me the rod of affliction, and I have found it good to my soul; for he has given me such a hungering and thirsting after him as I never before experienced: and thanks be to God, I have been enabled to entertain more believing thoughts, and to trust my soul more into the hands of that God, who saveth all that come to him through the Saviour. O, my dear minister! I look and long for that time when you and I, I hope, shall be in that kingdom where the inhabitant never says, I am sick. I greatly long for that day when we shall meet before the throne of God. Then we need write no more letters, as you said in your last, to tell of our sorrows. No, for the warfare will then be over. I write this in much weakness of soul and of body; but it is the Lord's will, let him do what seemeth him good. I feel at times as if I should not be here long; but the Lord knows best, my time is in his hands. But oh! whether I live, or whether I die, oh, that I may be the Lord's in that day when he comes to make up his jewels, and my kind minister with me, and all my dear friends."

From the time of writing this letter her strength failed her more than usual, so that it was with much labour and difficulty she could walk to and from church; but so long as her poor feeble limbs could support the

emaciated body, so long did she make her appearance as a solemn worshipper in the earthly courts of the Lord's house; and I trust it may be said she continued to renew her spiritual strength by there waiting upon God.

The last letter she ever wrote was to her sister Sarah, dated June 13. It is a short one, and bears the marks of a weak and trembling hand. The greater part is taken up about domestic affairs, which having mentioned, she concludes her finishing epistle thus—"Dear sister! do not make yourself uneasy on the account of my being unwell; for it is the Lord's will, and he does all things well. And let us say as the hymn says,

"O, what are all my sufferings here,
If, Lord, thou count me meet
With that enraptured host t' appear,
And worship at thy feet.

"Give joy or grief, give ease or pain,
Take life or friends away;
But let me find them all again
In that eternal day."

"I remain your affectionate Sister in Christ,
"ANN EDWARDS."

From the date of this letter to the sixth of July, her decline was more rapid. On that

day (for it was Sunday,) she reached the church for the last time. But as my dwelling was not far from her cottage, she continued to attend at my room on Sunday and some other evening through the next three weeks that followed. The twenty-seventh of that month was the day on which she concluded her attendance there. Before another Sabbath came round she was too weak to cross the village street, too enfeebled to resume her accustomed resting place in the corner of my room. I could not doubt but that she was fast ripening for a better world, and I had long been in a manner prepared to look forward to her removal. Yet when I turned my eyes to that place where she had never failed to sit from the very commencement of our evening meetings, and saw it unoccupied, I seemed to have lost one of my children, whose presence and attention, whose pious and understanding answers to my questions, and whose general Christian example had been a stimulus and encouragement on so many occasions. The last Sabbath evening she mixed in our little assembly I felt myself too much exhausted by the duties of the day to say any thing in the way of explanation or exhortation to my children. The time was therefore expended on that, as on some other similar occasions, by their reading select passages of Scripture in rotation,

and singing a hymn or two, and one or two of them going to prayer. Ann was the person who that evening addressed the throne of grace. She was indeed weak in body, but there was a solemnity and earnestness in her simple unaffected prayer, that, while it warmed my heart with joy, pierced it at the same time with foreboding apprehension, that it was the last she would offer up there, and so it proved. Being from this time incapable of leaving her home, some of her school companions, agreeably to my wish, passed the Sunday afternoons with her; and there, while the other branches of the respective families were assembled for public worship, Ann and her two or three young friends sought the Lord in reading and prayer, until within a fortnight of her departure, when she was wholly confined to her bed. Some faint hopes had hitherto remained with me that she might possibly recover; but now the last ray of that hope was gone. It was my happiness from time to time to administer to the relief of her occasional pains; but medicine could not stay the approach of death. It was in vain that the kind attention of my medicinal friend and instructor was added to my own efforts. I saw my affectionate Christian child must sink speedily to the grave; and feeling that my seasons of communion with her on earth would soon be at an end,

I passed as much time with her as my other duties would allow; not only for her comfort, but for my own edification. It would be in vain to attempt a rehearsal of our conversations: all I can say here is, that they were sweet and profitable to us both. Many a time had poor Ann expressed her desire and hope that she might not live to see me depart from the village, either by death or any other event; and now she appeared much rejoiced under the assurance that her desire would be granted. Our subjects of conversation, while she was able to converse, were generally the goodness of God to her in providence and grace—the privilege of being called to know the Lord in the days of our youth, and of being removed at an early period from the miseries and snares of this sinful world—the love of Christ to a ruined apostate race of sinners, and that rest which remains for the people of God. So long as she was able to sit up as an invalid in the chimney corner, her Bible, Baxter's Saints' Rest, and her Hymn Book were constantly before her. And now that she was confined to her bed, these precious companions were always on her pillow, or spread open before her on her breast, so that we never had to look far for subjects of conversation.

Should it be asked, "What was the general frame and state of her mind when con-

fined to her bed, and evidently hastening to to the grave?" I reply, "With the exception of one forenoon, it was a spiritual heavenly calm; not rapture, but a steady and increasing placid rest on the promises and love of God as made to sinners in Christ Jesus: a holy, humble fear of offending, and an unvarying desire to depart and be with Christ. While she had strength she often spoke to her young friends who called on her, and urged them to stand prepared, and not to calculate on years to come. But for the last eight or ten days the stream of life ran so slow, that pulsation was scarcely perceptible at the wrist, and she lay much of her time in a drowsy, torpid state; now and then rousing and conversing a little: and sweet and satisfactory was that little which she then said. Constantly on these occasions did she affirm that Christ was present and precious to her soul, and times out of number did she repeat with peculiar emphasis one line of her favourite hymn, "I want, O, I want to be gone." Not that she suffered from bodily pain, and desired to die that she might obtain relief: no—for until within the last twenty-four hours before her death, she felt comparatively but little sufferings; but "her soul was in haste to be gone," that it might behold the Saviour's glory, and partake of his kingdom. On the first of September, 60.

ing in the evening to pay my last visit before bedtime, I found three or four of my other most serious girls with their afflicted but happy Christian sister. It was pleasing to witness their affection for each other, and it was an additional proof that the ties of grace are much closer than those of nature. With all the Christianity that poor Ann possessed, it was impossible she could feel that affection for some of her own brothers and sisters according to the flesh, which she did for those who were sisters in Christ Jesus, and who were of one heart and of one mind with herself. With these I conversed for a little while in the Apostle's words, "Here we have no continuing city;" and I endeavoured to urge them to "seek and insure one to come." I then went to prayer, and left Ann's sick room, fully convinced that God had been there as a prayer-hearing and answering God. Oh, that I could but enjoy such seasons every day of my life!

About 5 o'clock the next morning, Tuesday, Ann altered considerably, and appeared to those about her as on the very borders of her heavenly home; so that one of them came to say, if I wished to see her once more alive, I must lose no time. I hastened to her cottage, and on entering her apartment was exceedingly surprised, and not a little affected, at beholding her, not as I expected, in the

arms of death, but considerably revived. Her eyes sparkled with joy at my appearance, and I was once more enabled to converse with her, whom five minutes before I supposed had closed her lips forever on earth.—“Ann, my child, they told me you were dying, and almost gone!” She smiled and said, “My breath, Sir, gets very short.” “Well,” I replied, “it will cease altogether soon; are you willing it should?” “O yes, I want to be gone to my blessed Saviour.” I passed some time with her in similar conversation, as her strength would allow her to speak; and when I rose up to leave her, she ordered her mother to go to the chest of drawers, and get her little box, containing the letters I and some of her female Christian friends had at times written to her; together with several other little interesting papers. This box she delivered to me, saying, “Here, Sir, take this, and if I should die, pray keep it.” I received the little treasure, (for such I esteemed it,) and conveyed it home with mingled feelings of sorrow and joy.

The same day she gave directions about her funeral with all imaginable composure, choosing the pall bearers, and selecting the 25th 26th, and 27th verses of the sixth chapter of Job, for her funeral sermon—“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and

though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another."

At the same time she directed her mother immediately after her decease to present me with the Bible I had four years ago given her. This was the dearest pledge she could leave me of her respect and Christian affection, and as such I afterwards received it. Any little token of her dying regard would have been esteemed; but this was almost venerated, because it was that Bible which had travelled with her so constantly to church and to my evening meetings; and which had been, under the blessing of the Spirit of God, her solace, and constant companion through all her declining stages, even unto the grave. This Bible, blessed in itself, and from the above circumstances peculiarly dear, is now before me, almost filled with tapes, and labels, and ribands; and marked down—the margin in innumerable places where some sweet and precious portion was from time to time read by her with more than usual interest and edification.

Oh, how unlike is Ann's Bible to those in many families, where the moth eats its way through many a sacred text, and makes its nest undisturbed by the owner! Where those blessed portions that so often met the

eye and comforted the heart of poor Ann are hid, purposely, studiously hid by themselves, from their own sight.

Wednesday was passed in much the same way as the latter half of Tuesday had been, in great stupor and drowsiness; only with more acute pain, and latterly much restlessness, so that she could not continue long in one posture. But her mind was still unruffled, happy, and heavenly; and when she did speak, it was as usual, to express her desire to depart and be with Christ.

Thursday her bodily sufferings were considerably increased: but the tranquil state of her mind was not diminished. Several times she appeared almost gone, and then revivals would follow. I visited her about seven in evening, and finding her gone off in one of her fainting death-like fits, I reclined on the side of the bed to watch the first symptoms of recovery, and endeavour to learn whether she had any thing more to impart to myself, or to those relations and few Christian friends who were then sitting in the room.

All was perfect silence for a considerable time, and when I was beginning to despair of seeing her again revive, she opened her eyes, and perceiving me near her, said, sufficiently loud to be heard by all in the room, "May the Lord bless and preserve you for ever!" She then held out her hand to each

of her relations, and took a silent farewell—speaking only to her sister Elizabeth in nearly the same words she had done to myself; which having ended, she said in a low tone, “Now I shall soon be gone,” and so we all thought, for the exertion quite overcame her, and she again went off into every thing but a lifeless state. Under these circumstances I left her till ten o’clock, when I called again and found her once more revived and able to speak. On approaching her bed side, she smiled and said, “I thought I should have been gone before now.”—“I thought so too; but, my child, the Lord’s time is the best.”—“Yes, but will it be long?”—“I think not.”—“Oh, I long to be gone, and to be at rest!”

Having concluded a short prayer, I bid her farewell for the night, observing, “the Lord only knows whether I shall find you living in the morning.” Indeed I had no expectation of it. She saw I was agitated, and wishing to sooth those feelings which I could no longer conceal, she said, with much expression of tone and countenance, “Never mind; I hope, by the blessing of God my heavenly Father, I shall not.” I then left her, and was afterwards informed she lay more easy through the night than usual.

The next morning I hastened to her bedside: she was living, but unable to converse in the lowest whisper. Her spirit was flut-

tering to be gone, and the faculties of the mind were but momentarily and imperfectly retained. Enough, however, remained, and was manifested by expressive signs, that her dutiful respect and Christian affection were still in lively exercise towards her earthly shepherd. As many other duties crowded on me, I was obliged to leave her, and in less than half an hour after I had quitted her room, her happy soul departed in peace, and found a rest in that heaven where it so ardently longed to be.

This event took place about nine o'clock on Friday morning, the fifth of September, 1817. And thus ended the mortal career of Ann Edwards ; who, though called from the stage of life at an early period, left sufficient testimony behind her that she had not lived in vain, either as it concerned her own soul or the souls of others.

The following Sunday was a day to be remembered by many of us. Her corpse, followed by an immense concourse of people, was brought into the church at the commencement of the afternoon service; and the tears that rolled down the cheeks of one half of our crowded congregation, were proofs sufficient, that however humble Ann's situation, or unobtrusive her life and manners had been, she had lived long enough to

engage the esteem and love of many, both in and out of the parish.

Agreeably to her desire, I endeavoured to explain and improve the text she had selected, and to show from thence, 1st, That there would be a day of final judgment, when the Lord Jesus would descend from heaven and stand upon the earth. That at his appearance the graves would open, and the sea give up her dead. That some would rise to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.—2ndly, That it is not the will of our kind and heavenly Father that we should seek him in simplicity, in spirit, and truth, and yet continue in the dark as to our state of acceptance and pardon; much less that we should die in a state of uncertainty whither our souls are going after they have left the body.—3rdly, How a sense of our pardon and acceptance is to be obtained and continued alive; namely, by constantly going to the fountain of the Redeemer's blood for pardon, for all past sin, and by earnestly seeking the entire renewal of our hearts by the Holy Ghost, aiming to give ourselves up to his service, and to walk before him in universal righteousness and holiness all our days.—4thly, The blessing both in life and death of thus walking before God, and knowing that our Redeemer liveth. Here I endeavoured to introduce, as an illustration of my

subject, some part of the life and death of her who had selected the text from which I was preaching; but alas! I could say but little. My conscience smote me, and pointed to that word of God which says, "Rejoice always, and again I say unto you rejoice." I felt I had much cause to do so with respect to the life and death of the deceased. But nature, and friendship, and human frailties, and the glare of poor Ann's funeral pall directly before my eyes, were strong impediments in the way of my discharging my duty from the pulpit that afternoon as I ought; and must have powerfully convinced all present, that he who addressed them was a man of like passions with themselves. On the conclusion of the service in the church, very many of the congregation thronged round the grave, and not a few of our Christian friends again lifted up their voices and wept.

The stillness of a Sabbath evening, and the splendour of a September sky, shed all their enchantments on the grave of poor Ann and on those who surrounded it; and the plaintive notes of many who sung with tears rolling down their cheeks, all conspired to lift my spirit in longing desires towards a purer, and better world; while my feet seemed immoveably fixed to the spot where I had just pronounced the apostolic benediction.

⊕ In the most giddy part of my boyish days

I know my mind has often been arrested by the solemnity and suitableness of a burial service. As a youthful spectator I have stood on the margin of many a newly opened grave, and gazed first on the disjointed broken fragments of the ancient dead, once more thrown to the surface of the earth; and then on the corpse about to be buried out of sight. This I have done till an indescribable seriousness has for a moment chased away all my youthful follies, and in a manner prepared the mind to hear and receive that important and animating quotation from the clergyman's lips, "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours." But little did I then think I should ever stand in the priest's office on such occasions; much less that my soul would ever feel these words as it felt them when Ann's remains were deposited in their last and quiet resting place.

Farewell, my child, farewell. So long as reason and recollection are continued to thy pastor, so long will he cherish a lively sense, a tender recollection of thy piety to God, and thy gratitude and affection to thy teachers. Nor will he cease to indulge a hope, that thy consistent life and tranquil, happy end, may be remembered by others to the

glory of God, and the animating of their own souls, to run, like thee, the race that is set before them.

And now, my youthful reader, and especially my beloved children, the surviving companions, and former little class of her who has obtained her rest, let me address a few words to you. He who knows the secrets of all hearts knows how much it has been my delight to labour among you, and to endeavour to lead your youthful feet into the strait and narrow path of life to a kingdom that fadeth not away. And were it the will of God, I could wish, according to my abilities, to continue to guide your steps even to the end of your journey. But many circumstances make it probable that this will not be the case. It may be the pleasure of our heavenly Father to separate us for a while; you may be scattered among the surrounding villages, and I may be called to some distant parish or foreign part of the world. But wherever I am, you may be assured that so long as I sojourn upon the earth I shall continue to recollect and to love the spot, where the dear departed Ann and yourselves have so often met around me for Christian instruction. It is and will be my prayer, that the great Bishop and Shepherd of souls may ever bless you with a pastor after his own heart; one who shall feed you with the

bread of life, and constantly point out to your understandings and your hearts Jesus the Lamb of God, who was slain for the sins of the world.

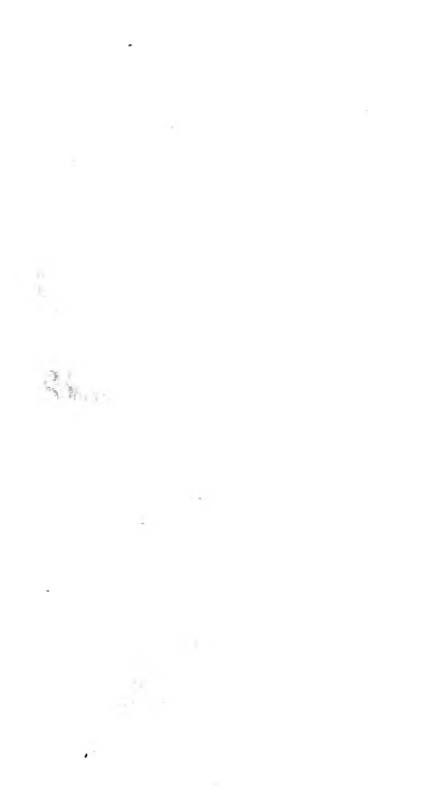
When the world, the flesh, and Satan place before you "the baits of pleasing ill;" and invite you to cast in your lot, and to sail with them down the smiling but destructive stream, Oh, then, my children, let me entreat you to attend to the small still voice of God within your own breasts, to recollect the peaceful death of your departed companion, to pray for grace to live her life, and then without doubt you will experience a similar happy end. Do not calculate on many years to come: let the early departure of your school companion and others around you, fasten this conviction on your souls, "That in the midst of life we are in death." Soon, my children, will that sun arise which is to be the last in your calendar, the last you will see on earth. It will set, but your eyes will not behold its going down. Its shadows will soon have traversed its allotted space, and marked the hour of your departure on the dial of life: and then all your days and all your earth-born hopes will end for ever. Many of you, I fear, are too little inclined to meditate on these things.—Youth and health are now on your side, and the tempter is often whispering, "Think not of

death, it is yet afar off." With respect to some of you this may indeed be true. He who numbers our months on earth may add twenty or thirty, or even sixty years to some of your days; but to whom, can only be known to him who is the author of life. Many of you will, beyond all doubt, depart from hence long before you have attained those years. But supposing that sixty summers and winters are yet to pass over your heads, how soon will these be gone! In the retrospect they will appear as a post that hasteneth by, or as the guest that called and tarried but a night. O, then, let me entreat you to live under an abiding sense of the shortness and uncertainty of time. Be assured that in every instance "the silver cords of life are loosening apace;" that the pins of these your earthly tabernacles are daily taking out. There is an hour fast approaching when your expiring lips must turn pale, when the blush must forsake your cheeks, when your limbs must quiver, and your pulse forget to beat—a moment when the crimson current in your veins will begin to stagnate, and the hovering soul be on the wing for endless glory or eternal wretchedness. When, therefore, you visit, as I hope you often will, yonder churchyard, to take another and another look at the little hillock that covers up the remains of her who so of-

ten met with you to hear, and read, and pray, let every such visit teach you this important lesson afresh—“*that time with you will shortly be no more.*” Stop a few minutes to indulge this solemn and edifying thought: and as you gaze on the turf-clad tomb of her with whom you once took sweet counsel, say to yourselves, “Such a little hillock will soon arise for me on this or some other spot of ground: it shall cover this flesh and these bones of mine in darkness, and shall hide them from the light of the sun, and from the sight of man, until the heavens be no more. Oh! that solemn, that awful day, which shall finish my appointed time on earth, my day and means of grace, and all the labours of my hands.”

Awaken, Lord, my slumb'ring sense,
To walk life's dang'rous road,
That when my soul is summon'd hence,
It may be found with God.

THE END.



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